1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
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616 Besides the division into tribes, and independent of it, the
●184 Andamanese recognize another division into coast-dwellers and forest-dwellers. In the *Aka-Bea* language the coast-dwellers are called *Ar-yoto*, while the forest-dwellers are called *Erem-taga*. The difference between them is due solely to the difference of their food supply. The *Ar-yoto* obtain much of their food from the sea. They are expert in fishing and turtle hunting. They make canoes and use them not only for hunting but also for travelling from one camp to another. Some portion of their food they also obtain from the forest, edible roots and fruits and the flesh of the wild pig being the chief. On the other hand the *Erem-taga* rely solely on the forest and the inland creeks for their food supply. Their only use for canoes is in the creeks. They are entirely ignorant of such matters as turtle or dugong hunting, but they are more at home than the coast-dwellers in the forest, and are generally more skilful at pig-hunting. The advantage certainly rests with the coast-dwellers, for they have both the sea and the forest to draw upon for their sustenance.

619 Some tribes consist only of coast-dwellers, such as the *Aka-*
Čari, the *Akar-Bale* and perhaps the *Aka-Kọl*. On the other
616 hand the *Aka-Bo*, although their territory includes a part of
184 the west coast, are, by their occupations and mode of life, forest-dwellers, and the same seems to have been the case of the *Ọkọ-Juwọi*. The *A-Pučikwar*, the *Aka-Kede*, the *Aka-Jeru* and perhaps also the *Aka-Kọra* tribes contained both coast-dwellers and forest-dwellers.

621 Each tribe formerly consisted of a number of independent
[421] local groups. The local group, and not the tribe, was the land-owning group, each one owning or exercising hunting rights over a certain recognized area. At the present time, owing to the breakdown of the local organisation, through the settlement of the islands and the resulting decrease of population, it is difficult to ascertain what area of country was occupied by each of these local groups. In many cases it would seem that the boundaries between two neighbouring groups are not very clearly defined, there being portions of forest over which the members of both hunted when the

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

361 have failed to learn that there are permanent encampments and kitchen-middens in the heart of the jungles of Great Andaman; but, since it has been recently asserted in a paper[1] by one of the officers long resident at Port Blair, that, to quote his words, "No tribe of Negritos in the same stage of existence . . . . as the Andamanese could exist in the Andaman jungles," it is very necessary to expose his error, for repeated inquiries and personal observation prove the accuracy of the account given by one of the inhabitants of the interior of Middle Andaman, named *Wō·i*, that during the entire year the jungles afford them ample sustenance.[2]

829 2. All the tribes with which we are acquainted possess
●184 terms denoting—1, a coastman; 2, a fisherman; 3, a creek man; and 4, a jungle-man; the two former being applied to those living by the shore, *àryô·to-*, and the two latter to those living inland, *ē·remtâ·ga-*, whose subsistence depends on the spontaneous products of the jungle, which they all agree in describing as amply sufficient for the support of many times their present population.

184 3. The coastmen are divided into two classes, viz., those who are chiefly employed in constructing canoes, turtle-lines, &c., and those who are engaged in fishing and turtling, but each acquires a certain knowledge of the duties of the other, and also of hunting the *Sus Andamanensis:* in the latter accomplishment, as well as in finding their way through trackless portions of the jungle, they are naturally surpassed by the natives of the interior, who display in these, as in other respects, all the dexterity and intelligence peculiar to savages similarly situated in other tropical regions.[3]

4. Although these two distinct sections (*àryô·to-* and *ē·remtâ·ga-*) still exist in a measure among the *.bō·jig-ngī·ji-*, as among the people of Middle Andaman, many of their more marked characteristics have become so blended or modified, in consequence of the establishment of the homes, that it is difficult in many cases to determine to which class certain individuals originally belonged. This, it will be understood, is because those of the *ē·remtâ·ga-*, who have accompanied parties of the coastmen in

[1] *Vide* "Proceedings Asiat. Soc. Bengal," July, 1876.

[2] With reference to the above, Mr. W. T. Blanford, F.R.S., remarked at the meeting at which the paper in question was read, that "it is very difficult for a civilised human being to understand how savages live, or even to conceive what a marvellous variety of animal and vegetable productions, on which savage man, at any rate, can subsist, are to be found in the forests of all tropical regions." He added, that it was his belief that "man could certainly find food wherever monkeys could exist."

[3] *Vide* "Physical Powers and Senses," paragraphs 5 and 6, and "Communications," &c., paragraphs 4 and 6.

2: Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

fishing and turtling expeditions, at one or other of the homes, for several years, have become sufficiently skilled in these pursuits to escape the ridicule of the genuine *àryô·to-*, while these in their turn have made themselves almost as well acquainted with the interior of the jungles as were the original occupants, from whom they are, therefore, scarcely distinguishable. 184

5. It will be of interest to note in this place the nicknames employed by the "junglees" and the coastmen when quizzing each other, as they serve to indicate the peculiarities which are held to be their distinguishing characteristics. The *ē·remtâ·ga-* sometimes chaffingly address an *àryô·to-* as *ēr-châ·tâknga-*,[1] *i.e.*, one who loses his way; *ēr-lō·inga-ba*, *i.e.*, one who cannot find his way in the jungle; or, *ūn-pâg-ī·knga-ba*, *i.e.*, one who cannot follow tracks; while the terms which the coastmen will, under similar circumstances, employ towards the jungle men are *ab-mū·lwa-* and *gū·gma-tòng-*, the first implying a deaf person, for only the practised ear of an *àryô·to-* can judge of the distance of a turtle so correctly as to be able to harpoon it in pitch darkness; the second meaning "leaf of the *Trigonostemon longifolius*," in allusion to the practice, current among the inland tribes,[2] of using these leaves for the cure of fever, but to which the *àryô·to-* rarely have recourse, as they believe the scent prevents turtles from approaching a canoe in which there are any persons who have recently employed this remedy. 184 829

6. The intermingling of the members of the inland and coast communities in and near our settlement has naturally resulted in such a marked modification of many of the characteristics which distinguish them in their primitive condition that, for reliable information respecting the same, it is necessary to seek among the more distant encampments, where similar influences have not as yet been at work. 184

7. Amongst those who have now for some years resided at the principal home at Port Blair, there is a young *ē·remtâ·ga-*, named *Wō·i*, of the *.ôko-jū·wai-* tribe, who, till the end of 1875, had been living in the depths of the Middle Andaman jungle, and who then, with a few others of his village, received a message from *mai·a .lī·pa*, chief of *.bàrlâ·kàbīl-*, an encampment on the coast, inviting them to accompany him in a trip he was about to make, by way of Port Mouat, for the purpose of seeing the officer in charge of the home, and procuring some presents from him. *Wō·i* and his friends gladly availed themselves of the opportunity of visiting what must have been to them a new 184 115

[1] By way of mock respect *mai·a* (*i.e.*, Mr.) is occasionally prefixed to these epithets when used in this way.

[2] *Vide* "Medicine," paragraph 2.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

●184 world: on their arrival at Viper Island, they saw, for the first
115 time, Europeans, and a mode of living of which they could have previously formed no idea. *Wō·ī's* companions returned to their tribe after spending a few months with us, but he, having lost his heart to one of the South Andaman houris, was without difficulty induced to remain behind, and settle down in our midst as a married man. As he speedily acquired a knowledge of the *.bō·jig-ngī·ji-* dialect, we were enabled to question him on various points, besides those referred to in the statement which forms one of the appendices to this volume,[1] and thus learned much that was before unknown concerning the habits of the inland branch of the *.ôko-jū·wai-* tribe: the information thus obtained, when compared with the result of our own observations of the customs and mode of living of the communities in the vicinity of our settlement, afforded convincing proof of the universality of the customs and practices of the respective classes of *àryô·to-* and *ē·remtâ·ga-* throughout Middle and South Andaman.

8. In Dr. Mouat's book mention is made of the capture of a youth, nicknamed "Jack," after a hostile encounter with some of the natives of Interview Island, from which circumstance it may be inferred that the lad belonged to the *.âkà-ked·e-* tribe, only one member of which had, till 1879, stayed amongst us, and he is an *e·remtâ·ga-*, who had travelled out of curiosity as far as Middle Strait, and from thence had been persuaded by the chief of that district to accompany him to Port Blair. He proved himself very intelligent and active in all jungle accomplishments, but was entirely ignorant of fishing and turtling After remaining with us a few months he was taken (in March, 1879), at his own request, to a point on the north-west coast of Middle Andaman, and landed with a heap of presents: his home, he informed us, was situated midway between that place and the east coast.

361 **Nomadism.**—1. Nomadism appears to be almost, if not
[768] entirely, confined to the *àryô·to-*, and even among them there are hamlets which are only abandoned temporarily, as with
221 the *ē·remtâ·ga-*, in consequence of a death, or of a *jeg-* (*i.e.*,
166 "corroboree"), at some neighbouring encampment.

2. The nature of the temporary migrations which take place among the *ē·remtâ·ga-* during the dry season, as well as of those necessitated by a death, will be explained in subsequent sections. In the case of the *àryô·to-*, migrations are occasioned by a variety of circumstances, as, for instance, fishing operations being rendered impossible by a change in the wind, the

[1] *Vide* Appendix F, a free translation of which will be found in "Journ. Anthrop. Inst.," vol. xi, pp. 284–2

619 now passing away and I well recollect 25 years ago, though the Bojigyab were then known to us, the "coming in" of the first Balawa from the Archipelago and of the first Chariar from the extreme north and the difficulty experienced in communicating with them.

In reading the following remarks on the tribes it must always be borne in mind that the statements therein made refer largely to a state of things practically already passed away and never likely to be revived. The reader can without difficulty use his discretion in separating what is from what has been in the course of his perusal.

619 184 **Their Division into three Groups.**—The Andamanese tribes are by themselves divided into three distinct groups, having certain salient characteristics: the forms of the huts, bows and arrows, of the canoes, of ornamentation, female clothing, hair dressing, and utensils, of tattooing, and of language common generally to the group, but differing in details and sometimes entirely from those of other groups. Judged by this standard the tribal affinities may be thus stated: Northern or Yerewa Group, Chariar, Kora, Tabo, Yere, Kede; Southern or Bojigngiji Group, Bea, Balawa, Bojigyab, Juwai, Kol; Outer Group, Ongе-Jarawa, who do not tattoo. Some of the tribes are divided into septs, fairly well defined under headmen and with a local area of their own, but not under any separate designation.

The Distinctions between the Groups.—It is worth while bringing together this remarkable series of differences dividing the Andamanese into three divisions; differences that more or less run through all matters concerning them.

[304] (1) *Tattooing.*—Bojigngiji; women are the tattooers cutting the skin slightly with small flakes of quartz or glass in patterns of zigzags or in straight vertical lines; face, ears, genitals, arm and knee pits are excepted. Men and women are tattooed alike. Yerewa; men are the tattooers, cutting the skin deeply with iron pig-arrow heads: short horizontal parallel cuts in three or five lines down the back and front of the trunk, round the anus and legs. Women are tattooed thus as life advances. Ongе-Jarawa; no tattooing.

[302] (2) *Hair.*—Bojigngiji; partial to complete shaving of head. Yerewa; long matted ringlets touching the shoulders. Ongе-Jarawas; closely cropped head to a mop. Ongе-Jarawa women are not shaved.

[291] (3) *Ornaments and female clothing.*—Bojigngiji women wear a bunch of five or six leaves in front: Yerewa women a loose tassel of narrow strips of bark: Ongе-Jarawa a bunching tassel of fibre. Bojigngiji women are most particular as to clothing: Yerewa women careless. Jarawa women are apt to be quite unclothed. Bojigngijis and Yerewas smear their faces with grey clay mixed with water, white clay in delicate patterns imitating the tattoo marks, red ochre mixed with turtle fat and almond oil in coarse undefined patterns. Ongе-Jarawas, with yellow clay mixed with water in coarse patches, red ochre mixed with the above mentioned oils on the head. Ongе-Jarawas wear no bone ornaments.

[302] [531] (4) *Ornamentation of utensils.*—Bojigngiji and Yerewas, slight: Ongе-Jarawas delicate and elaborate.

[323] (5) *Pots.*—Bojigngijis, pots with rounded bottom: Ongе-Jarawas and Yerewas with pointed bottom.

[412] (6) *Implements.*—Bojigngijis and Yerewas, coarse and rough in manufacture: Ongе-Jarawas, often delicate and neat.

[285] (7) *Baskets.*—Bojigngijis and Yerewas have a 'kick' and stand well: Ongе-Jarawas have uneven bottom and stand badly.

[411] (8) *Bows and arrows.*—Bojigngiji, *karama* bow and large arrows. Yerewa, *chokio* bow and small arrows. Ongе-Jarawa, curved long bow and long arrows.

(9) *Arrows.*—Generally common in type to all tribes: long with plain straight point, long with straight point and barbs, short with broad detachable barbed head for pigs.* Ongе-Jarawas and Yerewas, multiple headed arrows for fish.

(10) *Harpoons.*—For turtle, dugongs, and large fish among Bojigngijis and Yerewas: none among the Ongе-Jarawas.

* As the pig runs off, the trailing shaft is at once caught by something in the jungle and the animal is thus brought up short.

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[501] (11) *Canoes.*—Bojigngiji and Yerewa, same pattern canoe; Ongе-Jarawa pattern different from above. Both out-rigged, Bojigngiji has in addition a large dug-out without outrigger.

[342] (12) *Huts.*—Bojigngijis and Yerewas have temporary huts. Ongе-Jarawas have large permanent communal dwellings.

[535] (13) *Dancing.*—Bojigngijis and Yerawas, sounding board and song and clapping in unison. Ongе-Jarawa, standing in a ring and alternately bending and straightening the knees: also on occasion kicking the buttocks with the flat of the foot.

[352] (14) *Beds.*—Jarawas sleep on the wood ashes of the fires. Onges on raised bamboo platforms. Other tribes on leaves and in sand-holes.

[562 351] (15) *Food.*—The staple food of the Onges is the mangrove fruit, boiled, and they preserve small fish dried after cooking. None of the other tribes do this.

The Long-shore and Jungle Andamanese.—The Andamanese are by themselves again further divided into the Aryoto or long-shore men, and the Eremtaga or jungle-dwellers; the habits and capacities of these two differ, owing to surroundings, irrespective of tribe. Some tribes as the Tabo, Juwai, Kol, and the South Andaman Jarawas, are entirely Eremtaga, while the Balawa, the Chariar, and the Jarawas of the North Sentinel are entirely Aryoto. The Aryoto holds himself to be better than the Eremtaga, but beyond this there seem to be no exclusive distinctions between them and an Aryoto will marry or adopt an Eremtaga.

With the minuteness in matters concerning their surroundings that is characteristic of all entirely uneducated people, the Andamanese recognise a third division of themselves by habits into Adajig or creek-dwellers, *i.e.*, those who live on the shores of the many inlets of the sea on the coasts of the Islands. The habits of the Adajig, however, are practically those of the Aryoto.

Distinctions by habits are quickly lost by the Andamanese. The Jarawas have now no canoes in the South Andaman and are quite incapable of constructing or using them, though all Onges have them and so have the Jarawas on the North Sentinel. So also had the Jarawas that Colebrooke met a century ago. And this year (1902) it was ascertained that the young men brought up at the Duratang (Kyd Island) Home and occupied chiefly in market gardening could neither steer nor paddle a canoe, nor take up tracks in the jungles. In one generation, though there was no restriction in communication with their people, they had lost both sea and forest craft.

Former Isolation of the Tribes.—Before the arrival of the English the tribes, excepting actual neighbours, may be said to have had no general intercourse with each other, and excepting some individuals were entirely unable to converse together, though it can be conclusively shown that all the existing languages are directly descended from one parent tongue. Even Septs had but little mutual intercourse and considerable differences in details of dialect and, as has occurred in other island abodes of savages, there must have been a change of dialect or language along about every 20 miles of the coast. The tribes were in fact brought together and made definitely acquainted with each other's separate existence and peculiarities by the influence and exertions of Mr. Man between 1875 and 1880.

609 **Sympathies and Antipathies.**—The tribal feeling is expressed as follows: friendly within the tribe, courteous to other Andamanese if known, hostile to every stranger, Andamanese or other. The sympathy and antipathy exhibited are strictly natural, *i.e.*, savage, and are governed by descent. The feeling of friendliness lies in an ever-decreasing zone from the family outwards towards sept, tribe, group: hostility to all others. Even septs will fight each other and Aryoto and Eremtaga do not mix much. But there is no "caste" feeling, and tribes will, in circumstances favouring the actions (*e.g.*, living on the tribal borders), intermarry and adopt each other's children. Within the tribe there is so general a custom of adoption that children above six or seven rarely live with their own parents. It is an act of friendliness to give up or adopt a child and the custom has had the effect of making the various septs of a tribe hang together much better than would otherwise have been possible.

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000 showing what a fine sea boat she is. Two little Andamanese from the Ekudi village accompanied me, one of whom, Kogio Kai, had been in Port Blair before as a captive in 1885. On the 4th December I returned to the Little Andaman (arriving there on the 5th) with some fresh convicts and Andamanese. The weather on the way back was even worse than what we had coming up.

My absence, leaving a small party of convicts and Andamanese on the Island, had been a good test of the work done, and I found on my return that the Little Andamanese had been living with them in my camp in the most friendly manner.

I was kept in the creek by bad weather until the 12th December, during which time the crew of the *Ross* were employed in cutting firewood in order to save our coal, and the convicts and Andamanese went about with me inland and on the coast to the various villages.

I also commenced a coast line survey of the Island with prismatic compass and chain. The Little Andamanese or Ônges, as they call themselves, were constantly in camp and began to pick up a little Hindustani.

On the 12th and 13th I worked along the coast, surveying down to Tochangedu, where my work was stopped by the heavy surf, so I began on the 15th to work E. and S. from the North Point of the Island. A curious incident occurred on the 17th which will illustrate the influence I have acquired over the neighbouring people. Kogio Kai told me that a man of his own tribe had stolen some knives belonging to us. I sent for the man, admonished him and forbade him to come to the camp. Tahlai, one of his own tribe, then escorted him to Tambe Ebui, and he has not since been allowed to visit us. The Ekudi people on another occasion behaved in a similar manner to the Palalankwes who had stolen some turtle spears, refusing to allow them to land near the clearing or visit us for several days.

By the 19th of December I had surveyed as far as Titaije, meeting many people of all sizes and sexes who were very pleasant and friendly, and I then returned to Bumila Creek, beached the *Ross*, cleaned and painted her. Her Majesty's I. M. S. *Nancowry* called on the 21st, and on the 22nd I proceeded to Port Blair with the sick from my camp, and with nine Ônges picked from the following tribes:—Ekudi, Pálálankwe, Tokaie, Tambe, Ebui and Titaije.

I remained in Port Blair until the 27th when I crossed with the party to the North Sentinel Island. The Ônges gave me their name for it as Chirtakwekwe, and appeared well acquainted with it. They walked fearlessly about in the jungle, but, on catching some of the inhabitants on the evening of the 27th, it was found that they talked an entirely different language. On the 28th I visited Port Mouat, returning to Port Blair on the 29th, and on the 2nd January I returned to the Little Andaman.

During their stay in Port Blair, the greatest care was taken that the Ônges should not suffer in health, and they were shown every thing I thought would interest them, including the athletic sports and the military parade on the 1st January, and were also given quantities of presents, being allowed to have almost every thing they fancied, and they appeared so delighted with their visit that, on the way back, they said they would come up to Port Blair in their canoes in the fine weather.

On the 3rd January I started down the East Coast surveying. In addition to my party I was accompanied by Tomiti, Tahlai and Kogio Kai, who were of the greatest assistance. People came out to meet us at each village, and every one was quiet, friendly and pleasant. On the 4th I anchored in Daogule Bay, having been accompanied by nearly fifty people all along the coast. On the 5th I met at Toi-balewe, Nátúdétotali Kégé, one of the women who was captured on the Cinque Islands in 1885. On the 6th I met at Ingoie, on the South Coast, the three men who had visited me at Bumila Creek on the 3rd November last. I completed the survey on the 7th closing on Api Island, and then returned to Bumila Creek.

The weather now got stormy again, and I began to suffer very much in health. The survey being finished, I having visited all the villages round the Island and being on the best terms with all the people, and our stores being nearly exhausted, I returned to Port Blair on the 19th January with the entire party. The work I was sent down to do has, I think, been accomplished, and we are now on as friendly terms with the Little Andamanese as we are with the inhabitants of the North Andamans.

619 From what I can learn, I am of opinion that, while the whole of the Little Andaman Island is peopled by one race calling themselves Ônges, these people are sub-divided into tribes who adhere more or less to their own country, and who appear to quarrel and fight among themselves. What little I have learnt of their language I have embodied in my work on the languages of the Andamanese, written at your request, but the amount is small. It differs almost totally from any language with which we are acquainted, except that of the Jarawa tribes.

The people appear healthy, their principal diseases being chest complaints, coughs and colds, fever and itch. There is no syphilis amongst them, and in physique they compare favourably with the inhabitants of the Great Andaman.

Their manners and customs differ somewhat from those of our people, the principal differences I have noticed being the following:—

The large circular huts built by them; the raised charpoys on which they sleep: their habit of cooking, drying and storing in baskets a small fish similar to a sprat; the difference in the shape of their canoes at the bow and stern; the difference in their ornaments,

3: Temple G-5 (1901) 1903 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

and the absence of bone necklaces and broad tasselled belts amongst them; the women wear a tassel of a yellow fibre in the place of the leaf worn in the Great Andaman; the difference in the shape of the bow, which is of the European pattern. The arrows used for fish frequently have four heads of different lengths fitted into one shaft.

The people are by no means expert in the use of a canoe in the rough water, and are unable to harpoon turtle. They paint their hair only with red earth, and not their entire bodies, and they do not allow their hair to grow long; the women do not keep their heads clean shaved.

Their staple food appears to be the seed of the mangrove, boiled, as that article of diet is always to be seen in their huts, supplemented of course by whatever else they can get.

I may here mention that, after close and continued observation of their habits, I entirely disbelieve the legend that they were formerly in the habit of visiting the Car Nicobar Island.

It was very pleasant to see the numbers of healthy children of both sexes in the various villages; the people seem to marry later in life than do the Great Andamanese, but the same system of monogamy prevails.

The music of their songs is different and more pleasing, and it is not accompanied by clapping of hands, or striking of a sounding board. Their dance is peculiar and unlike that of the other Andamanese.

They have no religion of any kind, and I have learnt nothing of their traditions or superstitions from which they seem even freer than our people.

In conclusion I may say that the people are by no means fierce, being if anything of a milder disposition than our people, and I became very much attached to them, which attachment is, I think, returned. They are easily silenced or frightened, and are in great dread of a gun.

The Island at the north end appears to consist of mangrove swamp, and low belts of sandy soil on which the aborigines live. On the west and south-west coast the land rises into low hills of a coarse sandstone, running more or less north and south. The timber appears to be much the same as that of the South Andaman, and the rocks are chiefly lime and sandstone with a good deal of actual coral rock on the east and south coast. In one place on the point south of Daogule Bay I noticed an outcrop of igneous rock. There appeared to be no minerals.

The products of the sea appear to be the same as at the Great Andaman, but that the Tubiporine family of coral, particularly *Tubipora musica*, occurs in profusion. Dugong and turtle abound in the sea, and I captured two of the former, one being a remarkably fine specimen, and many of the latter.

The Ôngeś are very fond of turtle which they are unable to get with the facility with which our Andamanese catch them, as they are ignorant of the use of the harpoon, and turtle always formed a great part of my presents to them.

In rough weather landing is almost impossible on most of the coast, and in calm weather there are heavy ground swells and tide rips. The following are the best anchorages of small vessels:—Bumila Creek; Eketi Bay, just inside the north end of Nachuge Point; Gijege, opposite Ingoie, about half a mile from shore; Hut Bay; Daogule Bay and Obate. Landing is difficult in most places and I always used an Andamanese canoe.

* * * * * *

With regard to their (the Ôngeś) behaviour to shipwrecked crews, I am of opinion that the crew of any native vessel wrecked there would still be liable to be massacred, and though a European, if wrecked on the north coast might be well treated, I should not like to guarantee his safety. Shipwrecked sailors are rarely diplomats and would be extremely likely to resent the looting of their ships or persons in a manner which would certainly lead to their being shot. This looting cannot be prevented, the temptation being too great for any savage, however tame, and the general education of the Ôngeś will take some years. It is quite safe for any Settlement official to visit the Island and land. I would advise him first to land at Bumila Creek and take on board either Kogio Kai, Tomiti or Tahlai, or else *one of the following*:—Wane Lucgo *of the* Ekudi *tribe or* Kogio Kokolo *of* Pokolaokwe village, who would act as interpreters at any other part of the island, where he wished to land.

The presents which the Ôngeś most appreciate are hoop iron, rod iron, files, sleeping mats, cocoanuts, plaintains, beads, and specimens of the articles used by our Andamanese; also turtle, which can easily be got at the South Sentinel Island. The Ôngeś are, I believe, quite willing to come to Post Blair in their canoes in the fine weather, but great care should be taken that they do not contract any disease, particularly syphilis, if they do come up. They will take to smoking kindly, but I have not encouraged this, as my aim is to keep them in their healthy primitive state, and I believe this can be done, and they can still be brought to obey our orders and remain on friendly terms with outsiders. We require very little of them, and a close intercourse with these savages means death to them.

* * * * * *

On the 4th March the Chief Commissioner, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel Roberts, 7th Regiment, Madras Native Infantry, Mr. Portman, on special duty at the Little Andaman Island, Mr. Metcalfe, Officer in charge of the Andamanese, and a number of Andamanese, left Port Blair in the steamer *Ross* at 6 A.M., and arriving in Bumila Creek, north end of the Little Andaman at 2 P.M. Some of the Ôngeś, as the natives of the Island

Report of a Survey of the Inhabitants of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands during 1948-49

[71]

By

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About the end of the year 1946, Mr H. J. Stooks, Deputy Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs, consulted me with regard to proposals made by Sri A. V. Thakkar of the Bharatiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh for undertaking work for the amelioration of the conditions of the inhabitants of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on the same lines as the Sangh has been doing among the Bhils and other tribes of Central India. The problem of the Aborigines of the Andaman Islands, however, is not the same as that of the other primitive tribes of India. These people are some of the most ancient remnants of the human race still surviving in any part of the world, who had been very little affected from contact with other people and subsist principally on fishing and hunting. The need among them is not so much the spread of education and social uplift as the arrest of the decline in population which has been most alarming. Since the establishment of the Penal Settlement at Port Blair in 1858, the condition of the "Friendly Tribes" among these inhabitants have been most distressing. Due in the beginning to armed encounters with the forces of the Government, and also as a result of ravages from diseases like tuberculosis and syphilis contracted from Indian convicts, there has been a continuous decline in the Andamanese population. From an estimated figure of about 10,000 people in 1779 the tribe has been reduced to only 70 in 1931, and at the time of our visit there were probably not more than 37 individuals still living. Whether it will be possible to save the Andamanese from the fate of the Tasmanians whose last surviving representative passed away about 1770 is extremely doubtful.

The hostile branch of the Andamanese tribes known as the Jarawa-Onge-Sentinelese group, fortunately has been spared the fate of their more "friendly" kinsmen, and as a result of implacable hostility and comparative isolation have survived to a much larger extent. In the western forest belts of Middle and South Andamans, the Little Andaman, and the North Sentinel Islands they have resisted all intrusions from outsiders and were known to have lived in these places comparatively unmolested. No accurate census of these tribes however, was ever taken, but from estimates made by people who had some knowledge of the tribes, it does not seem possible that the total strength of these people could be more than a few hundred souls altogether before the last war. What has happened since and how far these people, specially the Jarawas, have suffered from Japanese occupation cannot accurately be determined. It is known that there had been some bombing by the Japanese in the Jarawa tract, but whether any Jarawa was killed is not known. I, therefore, suggested to Mr Stooks that an anthropological survey of the Islands was essential and a probable estimate of the surviving settlements of the population made before the question of any social welfare work can be considered.

9:Sarkar D-5 (1948) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Jarawa

[P.690]

The Jarawa of the Andaman Islands

By S. S. Sarkar (Calcutta)

Introduction

101 131 The Jarawa of the Andaman Islands are confined along the western coast of South Andaman, where their movements are restricted – roughly speaking – between Port Anson on the north and Constance Bay on the south (fig. 1). They are also reported from the southwestern part of the island of Baratang – an island completely separated from South and Middle Andaman. The latter group must, therefore, use some kind of watercraft to cross over from one island to the other. The extreme northern tip of the South Andaman [501] Island was until recently used by the Jarawa for crossing over to Middle Andaman through the two intervening Islands of Spike and Bluff with the help of bamboo rafts (Sarkar, 1954). This route has now been checked owing to the establishment of a police picket on Bluff Island.

101 131 501 The Jarawa also appear to have used some sort of watercraft to migrate into North Sentinel Island in the distant past. Their craft may have been similar to the outrigger canoes described by Bonig (1912) on the occasion of his visit to this island. The distance from Port Mouat to North Sentinel is about 24 miles and although Bonig says that "the boats are not very seaworthy" this distance must at one time have been crossed by the ancestors of the present-day inhabitants of North Sentinel Island. Bonnington (1932) used the term Sentinelese for them, while Lowis (1912, 1923) preferred to call them Jarawa. It appears from what little is known about them that they are more akin to the Jarawa of South Andaman than to the other Negrito groups. No canoes are reported from among the Jarawa of South Andaman ; it appears that the bamboo raft is enough for their transport on water. The Jarawa [184] outrigger canoes of North Sentinel Island, which Bonig mentions as somewhat different from those of the Onge or the Andamanese, indicate a somewhat higher cultural status of the former as compared with the groups living on South Andaman.

9:Sarkar D-5 (1948) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Jarawa

The North Sentinel Jarawa

The taming of the South Andaman Jarawa has been a moot problem of the local government in view of their occasional raids on the forest camps and offices. On this score the North Sentinel Jarawa appear to have an important function. Nothing is known of the length of their isolation on this little island of about 15 square miles but it is probably unaffected by the punitive expeditions, that are undertaken from time to time by the local government against the South Andaman Jarawa. When BONIG and his party landed on the west coast of North Sentinel Island on March 9th 1911, they were not received with volleys of arrows, but instead the "eight men on the beach and another five in two canoes" disappeared in the jungle. The same was true of those seen previously on the east coast. BONIG and his party visited some huts, which were of the lean-to type, and also went some miles inland without being troubled. BONIG therefore rightly concludes the following:

"The people appear very timid and it seems not unlikely that if they are approached frequently with presents, they will become friendly of their own accord. If this fails the small area of the island and the open nature of the forest would also make it easy to capture some, and after kind treatment let them go again".

As far as the present writer's knowledge goes this method has not yet been tried, but its utility lies perhaps in taming their South Andaman congeners. They could be made to settle round Port Campbell and other suitable areas on the west coast. A few communal huts built according to the plan and style of the South Andaman Jarawa should first of all be provided. They should be given all chances of expanding their population. Such an opportunity they are likely to seize if they suffer in any way from population pressure or from shortage of food and shelter. If their canoes are not seaworthy they should be provided with suitable water transport so that there may be frequent intercourse between the two islands.

The South Andaman Jarawa

Although no systematic ethnographic studies on the Jarawa have been undertaken, RADCLIFFE BROWN (1922) gave sufficient hints regarding the unity of the material culture of the Negritos as a whole. Physically they belong to the Negrito race, as can be seen from the few natives captured from time to time by the local government (SARKAR, 1952). The punitive expeditions have also brought to light some important facts of their material culture.

Thus, during the punitive expedition of March 1911 (LOWIS, 1912) near Pap-lunta-jig a big communal hut was found which had been erected on the ridge of a hill and which measured 45′ × 30′ × 15′. It was raised high above the ground and was supported by a number of stout piles. The structure was different from the Onge communal huts in that the floor was raised, while in the latter the floor is just the surface of the earth. The eves of the Onge communal hut touch the ground.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onges

Western standards taciturn or sly, and the Negro peoples, who frequently manifest complete abandonment in their amusement. Obscenities appear to be an unfailing source of amusement to the Onges, who indulge in them at every opportunity, even with strangers, and the obscene dances of the womenfolk are a continual source of pleasure. The exchange of obscenities is, indeed, a sign of friendship, and I found that vulgarity was invariably immensely successful in provoking hilarity; any subsequent negotiations were always peaceable and satisfactory.

An extension of this vulgarity is an infantile vanity, not without sexual significance. The care with which their bodies are painted nearly every day is one aspect of this vanity; the more a wife loves her husband the more magnificent the designs she executes on him. The paintings on their bodies reach a peak every two or three days, as the Onges fear illness and death if they are not newly daubed, and the face at least must be continually painted, with at least smears on the chest, arms and legs. A man returning from an exceptionally successful hunting trip is met by his wife with a specially unusual and elaborate design, which she carries out with great devotion. During each of my visits to the island the Onges would rush up to show me their embellishments as soon as they were finished, and took a delight in standing in front of my camera, even though they had no idea what it was for.

It is curious that unlike most primitive peoples, the Onges do not practise tattooing, which is one of the simplest ways, if not *the* simplest, in which such peoples satisfy their craving for physical admiration. The other Andamanese do, puncturing the skin with tiny slivers of obsidian or quartz, but the Onges paint with ochre instead. They love, too, to weave garlands of fruit, flowers and leaves from the forest, returning to the camp laden with them, men and women alike, delighted with their own beauty. This divergence of customs in peoples essentially of the same stock, but separated for long periods of time into endogamous isolates, is very remarkable.

An intense preoccupation with sexual attraction and activity has led to the prevalence of aberration. All the Onges have homosexual tendencies. I became aware of this during my first visit to Little Andaman on one of my longer expeditions, when I had taken only men with me, and on subsequent occasions I therefore allowed the men to bring their wives. The effect of long periods of absence on

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

Owing to the difficulty of pushing through the undergrowth the Onges always travel in single file, following closely behind one another, the men first, then the women and children, with the dogs following all round. They never travel alone; I hardly ever met any by themselves, but always in groups of families or groups of hunters. The man who happens to be at the front of the file is the guide and when they come to an awkward part of the journey – perhaps across a deep river – everybody helps. Trees are felled to fall across between the banks and a rope of lianas is run across to make the crossing easier for the aged, the women and the children, though their sense of balance is so good that most of them manage without it, even when carrying heavy loads across a single trunk.

The Onges are now nearly all related to each other in some way. They all know each other, and the contacts are usually friendly. The few squabbles which I saw, always over game, or food that had been gathered, all blew over very quickly; normally, especially in the dry season when every group becomes nomadic in search of food, everyone went freely all over the island. On the occasions of the great hunts, or the honey feasts, a number of groups would band together for the occasion and even then they tried to divide the spoils equally and peaceably. If a dispute does arise the camp will break up into factions, but these will still keep close to each other and after a short while their differences will be made up with the usual long and tearful embraces. These scenes of reconciliation may go on for days, all starting from nothing more serious than a difference of opinion over the division of game captured by communal effort!

Much more important than the danger of offending other human beings is that of causing offence to the spirits of the dead or the guardian spirits who provide food. There is, as I have said, not overmuch rigidity in their observations – no propitiatory offerings of any kind are made to the spirits. The supreme being, Eiuga, who takes the shape of a lizard bigger than a crocodile, they know well. On Great Andaman he becomes Puluga, equally powerful, lord of men and things but rather more anthropomorphic than his counterpart in Little Andaman. As Eiuga lives in the sky, the thunder is his voice, and the wind his breath; if he is angry he breathes out storms and throws burning tree-trunks down to the earth, setting light to the forest. Behind Eiuga are a series of minor spirits who

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

ancient times. Great Andaman abounds in these man-made humps, to which the name 'kitchen-middens' has been given, but none are in use today. In Little Andaman, on the other hand, many are still being built up.

The sweeping operations disturb clouds of flies and tiny beetles, light brown in colour, shot with metallic blue, with a highly domed back, and about five millimetres long, which always collect under bones and other human food refuse. Hordes of fleas, invisible in the dirt on the floor but multiplying busily, are also stirred up. Fortunately there are no lice on Little Andaman, owing to the absence of clothing and bed-linen, and the Onges carry no lice in their hair.

In fact the dogs' coats carry the fleas from place to place more than do their naked, smooth-skinned owners. Every time I went into a hut which had been empty for a time, as happens in the dry season when the occupants are away on a hunting trip, I was assailed by swarms of fleas such as I had never imagined! They rushed up one's body from feet to neck in absolute serried ranks, platoons of them, solid masses of tiny black moving objects. The only thing to do was to go out into the open and douse oneself in Flit, which caused them to retreat hastily. My camp-bed was always given a precautionary dose. Unfortunately Flit was not enough to disperse the clouds of ticks, tiny but dangerous, and a scourge in the forests of the Andamans. The Onges call them *anaghe* and thoroughly enjoyed helping to catch them on me in hundreds after every expedition into the forest.

None of these pests worry the Onges, who make no attempt to get rid of them. They leave mounds of filth round their huts or in their forest camps for them to breed in, and the light covering of earth or leaves which at best cover the Onges' faeces, deposited near the camp, was never any deterrent to breeding. The Onges never dig sanitary trenches or prepare any other form of latrines, even for their permanent sites; the forest is all concealing. However, they will never defaecate near, or in, a water course, even when the bed is dry, and when my men used the bed of a dried-up stream for the purpose the Onges protested to me, because the water would be contaminated. I was not disposed to contradict them.

In the forest, meeting a swarm of flies was a sure sign that we

342 354 allowing the smoke to escape and letting more air in – a very welcome relief at times, even for the Onges!

342 122 I made sketch plans of all the huts I visited, with positions of the supporting poles, beds, etc. Two typical ones were those at Toqué-è-bùie and Tambe-e-buiè. In March 1932 the former had some parts of the roof missing, as the inhabitants had taken the mats off to make temporary shelters in the forest; when the rains came they brought them back and replaced them. This custom explained why, on Great Andaman, some obviously temporary shelters had roofs far too well made to be intended for purely temporary use.

352 354 342 Entering the hut at Toqué-è-bùie, by the entrance proper, one finds oneself facing an area with no beds in it. In the centre of this area, under the apex of the roof, is a fire, a little larger than those kept burning beside each bed. This is used for communal cooking during the rainy season; at other times all cooking is done in the open. The ground area covered by the roof was 9·12 square metres, its height at the centre 3·3 metres, and the external circumference [364] 30·65 metres. Beyond this stretched the ring of refuse built up by each short period of occupation.

342 [184] Unlike many of the huts of Little Andaman, Toqué-è-bùie has a central pole, not thick, but of a very hard wood. In a circle round this are ten upright poles, each about two metres from the central pole. Starting on the left of the entrance and moving clockwise their heights vary slightly.[1] Outside this inner circle of supporting poles are two more concentric rings of uprights, the first, with a radius of 3·65 metres from the central pole, consists of twenty uprights with an average height of 1·35 metres, and the second, with a radius of 4·53 metres from the centre pole, has an average height of 0·58 metres. In nearly every hut each circle of uprights is attached to the roof by a ring formed by a bundle of long canes, to which each upright is lashed. Another bunch of long canes runs transversely from the entrance to the opposite side of the hut, almost touching the ground at the two ends, touching the roof in the middle, and fixed to the rings of canes to which the uprights are attached.

The bundle of canes forming this arch support is clearly set in place after the erection of the first (innermost) ring of uprights, and actually lies on top of the ring of canes to which they are

[1] 2·45, 2·33, 2·32, 2·3, 2·45, 2·33, 2·3, 2·33, 2·32, 2·33 metres.

352 The beds are supported on four convenient branches forked at the top, on which the four poles forming the bed frame rest. The size of the frame varies between 1·55 × 0·65 metres and 1·15 × 0·43 metres, and on this small platform the entire family sleeps huddled
513 together. The human members of the family lie longwise, all with their heads on the same log set as a head-rest (unless they are lucky enough to find a suitable giant bamboo washed up on the beach). Very occasionally a rush mat about half a metre square is laid on the platform, but usually the family just lies on bare canes packed tightly together on the frame parallel with the long side.

342 The hut at Tambe-e-buiè, its 1951 edition delayed till 1952 by
352 the earthquake the previous year when part of the coast dropped,
184 was rather larger than Toqué-è-bùie. In 1953 it was rebuilt twenty
[731] metres or so further back from the sea, but exactly as before. It has twelve beds, including two on the high platforms for the adolescents, one of which has two tiers, on the principle of our bunks. I saw this type of thing on a number of occasions and on one occasion I saw one being built out in the open, with the top platform three metres from the ground. All the beds at Tambe-e-buiè are rather higher than at Toqué-è-bùie (but not as high as Beniabol) and were all arranged radially; the platform on which meat was kept was two metres off the ground.

342 An unusual feature of Tambe-e-buiè, which had a diameter of
184 13·55 metres and a maximum height of 4·5 metres, was a series of six vertical poles set in a straight line to support the main transverse beam, one of which could be regarded as a centre pole. The pole on each side of the centre formed part of the innermost circle of supporting poles; there were two more circles, all supporting rings of canes. Unusually, only one of the rings of canes supporting the roof did not rest on vertical poles. The outer ring was only 0·4 metres high and the edge of the roof almost touched the ground, although one could still brush the fronds apart and crawl out. The roof mats were rectangular, very well made, and larger than at Toqué-è-bùie; some were three and a half metres by three metres or more, laid over seven or ten split reeds, instead of the usual four or five.

312 No permanent hut, or even a temporary shelter, is ever built far
[361] from water supplies adequate for the number of people in the group. If there is none visible, the Onges know how to dig for it,

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

CHAPTER FOUR

A Journey into Prehistory

842 The complete lack of hygiene of the Onges does not explain their disturbing lack of fertility. Nor can filth, smoking or loose living fully explain the sterility of the surviving Arioto.

There must be some other cause, and this in all probability is merely biological. One might call it the senescence of a race brought about by their total isolation for thousands of years, exacerbated by being broken into small endogamous units, all mutually hostile. This is not the opinion of all (the few) who have studied the Andamanese, and the problem remains to be investigated further.

262 184 842 In the Onges at least it cannot be a question of malnutrition, as I had ample opportunity of seeing during my visits to the island. Food is abundant, both the land and the sea offer an inexhaustible supply, even to the point of sustaining life, alone, if necessary, to all the Andamanese. The Jarawas are the exception. Forced away from the sea into the forests, they are dependent on one source of food, and it is therefore possible to make some attempt to calculate the maximum number of people which could be supported by their territory. In the case of the Onges, however, living amid luxuriant vegetation, with a rich source of sea food nearby, a given area can support a far higher population, and the same is true of the Jarawas cut off on North Sentinel.

The food of the Jarawas consists mainly of pork, with fresh-water fish (including some excellent carp) river molluscs and crustacea in large quantities, roots, tubers, wild fruits and honey. The Arioto, staying as they did in the coastal areas of Great Andaman, must have lived mainly off the sea.

175 151 842 262 The small population reported in the Andamans by visitors to the islands in the middle of the last century cannot therefore be

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

among the Onges) of wearing not only necklaces of the carpals and tarsals of deceased kin or pieces of rib, but also, in some groups, the skulls, painted with ochre and hanging from a cord round the neck. The long bones, painted red and white, were reburied in the communal hut. The Onges of today carry only the coloured jawbones of their kin.

No ornaments were found in the middens, nor did we expect to find any, as at death the Onges (and presumably their ancestors) bury all the personal objects of the deceased secretly in the forest, where the termites destroy all traces.

Not all the Arioto can have carried skulls and jawbones. Some clearly carried neither, as all the bones are sometimes found in the middens. A few middens are completely without human bones, particularly in the Port Blair area. Nevertheless at Ciauldari (or Chowldary), ten kilometres to the west, I found in January 1954 long bones without the skull or jawbones, and at Maya Bandar in 1953 I saw almost complete skeletons, not in anatomical position, owing to exhumation and reburial, but including skull, jawbones and in a number of cases the small bones as well.

The evidence of the middens thus clearly shows that burial and subsequent customs differed considerably among the various groups of islanders in the past, as they do today. The majority, judging from the Onges, seem to have remained faithful to a given custom, the dead in all cases continuing to remain a part of the group, whether or not any particular bone was carried about by the members of the group.

It is somewhat surprising to find customs varying so markedly in so primitive and numerically small a population, even though isolated in groups. The explanation lies in the fact that long-established customs may be altered overnight as the result of a 'revelation' by some seer, only to have the new customs overthrown themselves in the course of time by the next 'revelation'. I had an experience of this in the Onges when Enagaghe, a well-known seer, announced one day that he had received an order from the spirits about the way in which hunting trophies were to be displayed. No longer were pig jawbones to be impaled one behind the other on poles hung horizontally along the sloping roof of the hut a little above the hunter's bed. The whole skull, including the jawbones, was to be preserved, the bones held together in their natural

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

position by reed cords, which were to be tied in front of the snout, ending in a cord by which the skull was to be hung above the hunter's bed. No sooner said than done, and at the beginning of 1914 all the old trophies were thrown out into the forest, to be gradually replaced by the new ones. Fortunately I had collected some of the old trophies before the 'revelation'!

From the evidence of the middens it would appear that these variations in burial customs have no practical basis, and probably all derive from similar 'revelations'. Further investigations in a large series of the deposits, enabling dated comparisons to be made, would be extremely revealing.

Even allowing for these sudden alterations in established customs, it is clear that their elaboration indicates slow and hardly perceptible development over long periods of time and the middens must be dated in millennia. The hypothesis put forward by some scholars that the Andamanese are descended from negro slaves who escaped while on their way to the Portuguese colonies in India in the sixteenth or, at the earliest, fifteenth centuries, seems therefore quite untenable, in face of the abundant evidence in favour of the great antiquity of the middens and of the people who built them up.

It seems clear that during the last few thousand years, successive waves of migration have taken place over a whole area bounded on the west by the Andamans and Nicobars. All indications point to a close connection between the Andamanese and the peoples to the westward, the Negrito element remaining alone and almost untouched in the Andamans, but becoming submerged in the Nicobars into the mongoloid element of more recent origin. Even today a number of Nicobarese show signs of Negrito ancestry; short in stature, they have crinkly hair which although long is very different from the straight black hair of the mongoloid element, and their heads, noses and lips bear clear signs of Negrito ancestry.

In addition to these more general conclusions the middens also cast some light on the origin, still somewhat problematical, of the wretched Jarawas of Great Andaman. Comparisons between their middens and those of the Onges show that there were in the past communal huts on Great Andaman exactly the same as those still extant today on Little Andaman.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

The continual fighting between the Eremtaga and the Arioto led, as we have seen, to the gradual disappearance of the communal huts of the latter as being too vulnerable. Subsequently, the conflict still going on between foreigners and Jarawas completed the destruction, so that there are now no communal huts on Great Andaman. The ever-increasing violence of the punitive expeditions against the Jarawas put an end to their numerical recovery during the last fifteen years or so, and there may indeed now be none left. Today only their kitchen-middens, and the surviving Onges, remain to show us how the Jarawas must have lived.

The Jarawa middens are distinguishable from those of the Arioto by their inland position and by their content of freshwater shellfish and land gasteropods, not eaten by the peoples of the coast.

Like the kitchen-middens of the Onges, those of the Jarawas contain human bones clearly interred in graves, and not scattered among the refuse. This refutes the Arioto accusation against the Eremtaga of cannibalism, and that of the people of South Andaman (now vanished) against the people of North Andaman and the Onges; the remains of cannibal feasts would undoubtedly have been found among kitchen refuse and not carefully buried in the ritual manner, with the graves filled in with earth. And the Jarawas and the majority of the Arioto buried their dead in the communal huts, continuing a custom which originated while they were still on Little Andaman. In time variations arose, but this does not alter the evidence in favour of migration in ancient times from the south, via the Nicobars and Little Andaman.

The differences in culture between the islands can be explained by the ease with which primitive peoples forget. The Jarawas, for example, although they reached Great Andaman by sea from Little Andaman, forgot in a few generations the art of hollowing canoes when they were forced to live in the depths of the forests, far from the sea. Today, they have been free from the Arioto for some time, at least on the west coast, and have access to the sea, but they have not started building canoes again. In other things, however, such as burial rites, the Jarawas kept faithful to the old Onge customs; their middens show the same exhumation of the bones, the same cleaning, and tinting with ochre, and careful reburial.

The general similarity of the middens in Great and Little Andaman cannot be due to chance. Animal food, for example, has clearly

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

been cooked in the same way; the bones are never charred, but always have the appearance of being cooked in an earth oven. The direct roasting of large game over the fire, postulated by some authorities, including Brown, was never practised; the islanders preferred to go on as they had done since time immemorial, because it was more efficient – witness the traces of the earth oven which are to be found all over the world, including Europe. In Polynesia and Micronesia, and among the pygmies of Asia and Africa, it was widely used; variations when they arose did so as the result of local circumstances, like that of throwing water on the fire instead of using fleshy leaves, when there were none in the area. But the basic principle remained the same everywhere, and the use of the earth oven coincides with the geographical distribution of hunting, gathering and burial customs similar to those found in the Andamans.

In April 1954 I excavated the midden at Tambe-e-buiè on Little Andaman, abandoned after the earth tremors of 1951, to investigate the position of the beds. The custom of burying the dead underneath their beds made it possible to trace the latter by the human remains below them, arranged in a circle round the periphery. The Onges themselves helped in the work, sometimes even trying to recognize the remains as they came to light.[1] There were clear signs of reburial. The body is buried immediately after death at least one metre deep; whereas after exhumation, cleaning and colouring, it is never re-interred more than thirty centimetres below the floor of the hut. When another death makes it necessary for a new grave to be dug under the bed, the piles of bones from the second are disturbed, so that in time a form of ossuary develops. In this it is not possible to identify the various remains of individuals unless some change in the position of the hut, even by a few metres, preserves the bones from disturbance by fresh graves. Traces of the graves always remain, however, as they are invariably filled with fresh earth.

We have already seen that on Little Andaman the introduction of the dog reduced the consumption of shellfish (and hence the rate

[1] The material recovered is now in the Anthropological Museum of the Andamans and Nicobars, which I helped to establish at Port Blair. The museum was inaugurated on 6 June 1955 in the presence of the Governor, Mr A. K. Ghosh and the chief Indian officials of the town.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

of growth of the kitchen-middens), judging by the number of shells in the deposits. On Great Andaman, on the other hand, the Jarawa, unable to keep dogs for fear of revealing their whereabouts with the barking, continued as they had always done, and the gradual disappearance of their middens was due not to any change in eating habits but to the breakdown of the communal hut system. Among the Arioto, already decimated for over a century by fighting with the Eremtaga, the dog seems to have had no effect on the situation, as the Arioto had dogs as far back as 1857. Possibly they regarded them in the same way as the Onges who, though deeply attached to them and quite incapable of eating them at any time, never go so far as to bury their bones in the middens; the carcase is thrown out into the forests for the monitors and the termites to dispose of. It is also probable that the introduction of the dog came too late, when the Arioto were already too depleted numerically for any change in their eating habits to be appreciably reflected in their middens.

In both Great and Little Andaman the middens are found only where the communal huts have been constantly rebuilt on the same sites. Where the ground permits, the base circle (or rarely, the ellipse) has been moved somewhat from side to side, without, however, greatly affecting the regularity of the shape. At Totamaddalù on Little Andaman I was interested to see that although the diameter of the midden lessened as the numbers of the group occupying the hut dwindled, the site remained unchanged. Today the base area of the midden is very extensive compared with the size of the hut now built on it, but its anthropological value is thereby increased.

The advent of the dog into the archipelago in about 1857 vastly increased the amount of meat available to the Andamanese. Once introduced into Little Andaman[1] the dog population increased explosively, as the Onges dare not kill any of the pups; the women even go so far as to suckle motherless pups themselves. This inordinate love of dogs has allowed the animals to become a pest. They already considerably outnumber the human population; families of only three or four people may have ten or twelve dogs,

[1] The dog reached Little Andaman only at the beginning of the present century; von Eichstedt in 1928 noted that the Onges had very few of them.

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they may be, and the strays of the Andaman forests howl unceasingly. Even in the Onge encampments the dogs howl enough to wake their sleeping masters; the only way to stop the noise is for the Onges to forestall it by taking their dogs into the family bed, fleas and all. There ensues silence, warmth and more fleas!

Hunting weapons of the Andamanese, the Semang and the Aetà were originally made by all three peoples in a similar way, common to all the Negritos. None have any defensive weapons as such; their bows and arrows, never feathered, serve as arms as well as for hunting and fishing. Shields are unknown and spears, rare in the Andamans and among the Semang, are apparently no longer in use among the Aetà; where they exist they are usually mainly for hunting. All three peoples, however, have the arrow harpoon.[1]

Their bows are all clearly derived from the same source. In the Andamans, only the Onges and Jarawas have remained true to the original form, local variations arising at a later date, and they afford additional evidence in favour of Little Andaman being the original springboard from which the Negritos entered Great Andaman.

All the Negritos make their bows from one piece of wood stripped longitudinally from the living trunks of large trees such as *Mimusops littoralis* or *Pterocarpus dalbergoides*. After they have been left to season the strips are patiently fashioned into the required shape; for this the Onges use the shells of *Cyrena* (the freshwater species, which are tougher). The bows are straight, thicker in the middle and gradually tapering towards the ends, and are usually 1·6 metres long, although there are exceptions. The cross section is the same throughout the length of the bow, varying from three or four centimetres diameter at the centre to two and a half centimetres at the horns. The inner surface is so slightly curved as to be almost flat, while the back is markedly convex. The blunt horns end in a 'shoulder and neck' stop to take the string, the neck projecting about one and a half centimetres beyond the shoulders – enough to hold the bowstring. The shoulder is formed by strips of *Ficus* bark wound round the bow, or the yellow fibres of *Dendrobium*; one shoulder is invariably larger than the other. The string itself, made from long thin strips of *Ficus* bark twisted together, has a very narrow loop on one end and a larger one at the other;

[1] See p. 86.

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when stretched the string remains held in place by the two loops, one too small to slip over the lower shoulder, and the larger one held firm on the upper shoulder by the tension of the string.

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When the bow is strung, it is placed upright with the lower horn firmly on the ground, the string already looped on to the small shoulder. The top of the bow is forced down (either hand being used indiscriminately), a foot being pressed against the grip to help it bend; the other end of the string, with the large loop, is then run up the stave and slipped over the larger shoulder, where the tension holds it firm. Considerable individual variation may occur in the art of making the bow and preparing the string and also in the actual stringing. In the Onges, apart from the size of the bow, the variation never went beyond slight differences in the curvature of the inner surface and back, the former being in a few cases quite flat, or even concave, as in the Jarawa bows. Neither the Onges nor the Jarawas, including those on North Sentinel, decorate their bows in any way, but the Arioto like to make a series of small straight cuts on the horns, on both the inner and outer surfaces and sometimes even cover the bow with bizarre red and white lines, which wear off very quickly with use. There appears to be no real difference between Onge and Jarawa bows, except that the latter tend to be larger, in keeping with their intended use as hostile weapons.

From the original Negrito bow of Little Andaman the so-called S-bow of the Arioto evolved as the result of a number of minor innovations. The basic principle remained the same, but in an effort to take greater advantage of the elasticity of the wood the rudiments of the distinction between the two horns later developed into a distinction between the two halves of the bow.

The unique modification which the original form of bow underwent on Great Andaman turned the stave into a composite of two spear-shaped halves, the upper almost straight, the lower slightly curved. At the horns the bow is still almost round in section, flattening as the 'spear' broadens out; the general dimensions and shape of the bow vary little between the Arioto of the south and north of the island, although the latter make the diameter at the horns rather larger. The two halves are joined at the centre of the weapon, forming a grip which is the thickest part of the bow. The simple difference in the size of the shoulders in the Onge bow now

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becomes more complex; the upper horn is more pointed than the lower, and there is a difference between the upper and lower halves of the bow, as it is necessary to prevent the loops of the strings slipping on the bow. The bow string is made not from *Ficus* bark, as in the Onge bow, but from thin *Anadendron* fibres, twisted together and waxed with beeswax; it has the usual loop at each end, and the bow is strung with the help of the foot as in the simpler version. When strung, this type of bow becomes S-shaped as a result of the variations in elasticity arising from the spear-shape of the two halves, but when drawn it assumes the normal shape. The fact that it is easier to draw an S-bow than a single-curve one, without any loss of propulsive force, is an interesting mechanical point.

The bows are only strung when required for use, and in the normal way neither they nor the arrows are ever seen by outsiders; they disappear up into the roof of the communal hut, or into the bushes round the temporary camps. Even with friendly Onges I had to ask specifically to see them, or surprise their owners out hunting.

The external influences to which the Semang and Aetà have been subjected have been strong enough to make them to a large extent forget their original form of bow, which has however survived alongside a large number of cultural inovations. The differences, for example, between the upper and lower extremities of both bow and string have persisted, and the shoulder-and-neck stop (although this is now made by notching the bow-stave deeply) so that we may reasonably assume that a close study of the Onge bow will give us the essential characteristic of a very ancient form of the weapon. The greatest modification to the original form is the one which has been made on North Andaman, and in an attempt to improve the effect of separate curving of the two sections selected trees are deliberately trained for the purpose, the cut wood being seasoned slowly over heat and smoke, paying particular care to the parts which will take the greatest strain. As a result the 'give' in the bow is markedly increased. But even here no fundamental alteration has been made in the design of the weapon.

The Onge bow, therefore, represents the forerunner of the somewhat more highly evolved type (now dying out with their owners) on Great Andaman, and adds further support to the evidence for

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the arrival of the Negritos in the Andamans from the south; yet more evidence is provided by the Onge arrows. In the Andamans there are two types of arrows, those used for fish, and those for game, the latter also being used against human targets.

The same arrows are found throughout the archipelago, confirming a common origin. Only the dimensions vary from one area to another and that only very slightly; the Onges have both the biggest fishing arrows, and the biggest arrow harpoons, and the Arioto the smallest. In the past the islanders used arrows with from two to four points for fish, but I was unable to find any traces of them; those picked up on North Sentinel some years ago were possibly the last to be made.

The fishing arrow of the Andamans is made basically from the small native bamboo. The Onges remove the knots by scraping them down gradually with *Cyrena* shells, and then cut off a length varying between seventy centimetres and about one metre. Into one end they fix securely a hardwood stick, fifteen to twenty centimetres long. This foreshaft takes the head, now nearly always iron, but in the past made of wood, fish spines or pig bone. In the kitchen-middens I also found heads made out of shaped pieces of *Tridacna*. The three parts of the arrow are then bound together with very thin waxed fibres, wound carefully round and round, great care being taken to prevent the bamboo shaft splitting where the foreshaft is forced in. The completed arrow finishes up 1–1·15 metres long overall. The head is barbed, to hold the fish once it is hit; to get it out the whole arrow has to be pulled through. Sometimes, but not always, the shaft has a notch in it, to take the cord, care being taken to make the notch never more than two centimetres from any knot, to avoid any possibility of the shaft splitting. Alternatively, splits are prevented by binding waxed thread tightly round the shaft.

The hunting arrow, or arrow harpoon, is an intelligent adaptation, the result of acute observation of wild life, and is more complicated than the fishing arrow which is intended only to pierce the victim. The hunting arrow must not only score a hit, it must also prevent the animal from escaping into the undergrowth and force it to reveal its position. The harpoon holds the victim cruelly and securely, and the excruciating pain caused by the drag of the cord forces the animal to reveal its position by its cries of agony. The

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screams of a wild boar can be heard for hundreds of metres, drawing the hunters in from all sides, eager to take it alive. If it proves to be a large male, whose tusks can inflict appalling injuries, the hunters kill it at once with a spear or with a third type of arrow which has a long fixed head. This type of arrow, which does not differ greatly from those found in other parts of the world, is still used by some of the Andamanese against human enemies.

The shaft of the arrow harpoon is made preferably from *Tetrantbera lancifolia*, very common all over the archipelago. The wood for the shafts has to be straight, very slender at one end, where a notch is cut half a centimetre deep to take the cord, and a little thicker at the other, which is hollowed out for about one centimetre to take the head of the weapon. Splitting of the wood at the ends is, as usual, prevented by binding the shaft with *gnetum* fibres, twisted into thread and waxed with beeswax.

The efficiency of the harpoon depends on the double-strand cord, extremely strong, made from *Hibiscus* fibres. One end is fixed on to the shaft, five centimetres from the point at which the foreshaft enters it, and the other to the foreshaft, two centimetres from the base, with a thirty-two centimetre loop of cord between the two fixings.

The harpoon blade, now made of iron, is eleven centimetres long and spear-shaped, ending in a series of barbs. The haft of the blade is bound tightly on to the short foreshaft, also eleven centimetres long, which is scraped thin at the end so that the haft can be bound on smoothly. The complete weapon mounted for use is about eighty-eight centimetres long overall in the Onges and Jarawas, and slightly shorter, about sixty-five centimetres, in the Arioto.

To prepare the harpoon for use the slack of the cord is wound firmly round the shaft, and the foreshaft with the blade attached is forced in. As the harpoon strikes, the shaft becomes detached and the victim, firmly held by the barbed arrow head, drags it along on the end of the cord until it catches in the undergrowth and holds the animal fast.

There is little difference between the arrow harpoons of Little Andaman and Great Andaman, and what difference there is affects only the dimensions, the type of cord, and the form of the barbs. The basic principle remains the same wherever it is found; all the Negritos, including the Semang and Aetà still use it, although these

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two have added feathers, and poisoned tips, in imitation of neighbouring peoples.

For the capture of large fish and animals such as turtles, dolphins and dugong, the Onges and Arioto use not the arrow harpoon but the spear harpoon. Brown saw none of these among the Onges he studied in Rutland, and consequently assumed its absence on Little Andaman. The Onges carry as little as possible on their sea voyages for the sake of speed, and would not therefore take spear harpoons (used only for marine hunting) with them on trips to Rutland, which they visit only for the purpose of hunting pigs and not to fish, or to hunt marine animals. They certainly have, and use, spear harpoons even today; I myself have been with the Onges and seen their harpoons used from the canoes. I had ample opportunity to admire both the effectiveness of the weapons and the accuracy of the throwers.

The greater structural and operational simplicity of the spear harpoon, in comparison with the arrow harpoon, leads one to suppose it the older of the two. Its cord is made of tough *Hibiscus* fibres, and with the aid of these and a straight shaft about six metres long and little over four centimetres in diameter, even the humblest of nails, seven centimetres long and three millimetres in diameter, can become the point of a spear harpoon. It is fixed into the shaft (usually of mangrove wood) which is hollowed out at the thinner end to take it, and with a cord up to a hundred metres long or more attached to the nail two centimetres from the head, the spear harpoon is ready for use – shaft, point and cord.

When the harpoon is to be used for turtles, no barbs are needed, as the point is driven so firmly into the shell that blocks of wood have to be carried in the canoes to knock it out for re-use.

The harpoon throwers stand ready on the platform jutting out fore and aft of the canoes (see p. 122), the free end of the cord is tied to one of the booms to prevent it being jerked out of the canoe as the victim tries to escape, and the slack is coiled in the bottom of the canoe. The thrower holds the cord against the harpoon as he waits for the right moment and then throws. As the harpoon strikes, the point detaches from the shaft, which floats on the water till picked up – often to be used as a punt-pole in the shallow waters of the coral reefs as the canoe follows the victim, now held firmly on the end of the cord.

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All the evidence points to this being far more than mere supposition and even today the Onges persist in their tendency to expand towards the north. In 1953 I could find no trace of a number of Onges whom I had known in 1952; the others told me they were all 'dead', but it seems probable that they had migrated to the islands further north. And in 1954 nearly all the canoes belonging to the communal huts in the south-west of Little Andaman, which I had seen in 1953, had vanished and were said to have gone with the 'dead'. It is probable that they too had migrated to Great Andaman, becoming 'Jarawas'.

This is physically quite possible. Between Little Andaman and Great Andaman the Onges have a line of transit camps, still in use, where food and water are easily available. All have a name, and I followed the line myself. With the help of their fragile but very fast canoes, and without carrying food or water (which they know will be available at the next transit camp), they can travel very quickly. They take fire with them in the canoes in the form of a burning torch and while they are at sea, unlike the lazy pace of their normal attitude to life, they seem possessed by the desire to reach the next stopping point on terra firma.

Moreover, one may deduce from the fact that the names of these transit camps are all in the Onge language that the migrations have always been from south to north. Little Andaman, formed as it is mainly of coral banks and only projecting a short way above the sea, disappears from view in the tropical mists a few kilometres from the shore; from Rutland it is invisible, and as the Andamanese only travel by sea with land in sight or when its existence and direction is well known, no one from the north would have dared to travel south into the unknown.

We have already seen that the ignorance of the present-day Jarawas as regards the sea is no bar to a hypothesis of their original arrival in Great Andaman by sea. Colebrook, a hundred and fifty years ago, actually saw them with canoes, and Gilbert Rogers[1] recorded seeing canoes on the coasts of North Sentinel very similar to those of the Onges today. The accumulation, therefore, of this evidence and the general similarity of culture throughout the archipelago all adds up to inescapable conclusions.

Even the unique dances enjoyed by the Onges are to be seen

[1] *Andaman and Nicobar Gazette*, 2 January 1904.

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Even the unique dances enjoyed by the Onges are to be seen among the Jarawas, with the characteristic marking of the rhythm by slapping the calves against the buttocks. This does not seem to have been a feature of the Arioto dances, in which the rhythm was by the *pukuta yumnga*, a kind of convex shield made of the very hard and aromatic red wood (*Pterocarpus dalbergoides*) which the termites never seem to attack. I was able to obtain one of these shields, the last that the twenty-three surviving Arioto possessed and the only musical instrument in the islands. It is played by one man with his feet, while the dancers, male and female, form lines on each side of him a short distance away. Before use the convex face is decorated with lines of white ochre and chains of tusk shells are hung from a hole at the end opposite to the one on which the player's feet beat; from the same hole runs a cord, which he holds in his hand to prevent the instrument moving away from him as he beats. The players change from time to time as the dancers shuffle on and on for hours in the light of the resin torches. But apart from the instrument itself, the rhythmic hand-clapping and the dancers singing in unison are the same throughout the Andamans.

The women clap their hands in rhythm, and then slap one thigh with the open palm of one hand, the other hand clasping the wrist, singing all the time. The men dance in Indian file, beating the ground first with the right heel, then with the left, the toes barely raised from the ground, moving a short way forward each time. As they dance they lean forward, then with hands clasped and their fingers interlaced. There are variations, but the basic step is always the same.

One difference between the Onges and the Jarawas is that in the latter both sexes are naked, while the Onge women have in recent times adopted the *naquineghe* or apron. Complete nudity was a characteristic of all the Negritos, including the Semang and Aetà, and the Jarawa migrations probably took place before the introduction of the *naquineghe*.

The present inability of the three peoples to understand each other is more a question of pronunciation than of difference in actual words. To examine the question fully it would be necessary to collect a large number of words and analyse their affinity; meanwhile we know that despite their inability to understand each other there is a close resemblance between the language of the Jarawas and Sentinellese and that of the Onges. Strict isolation can lead to

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completely lost the art of building them, probably by the same mechanism as the Jarawas, that is as a result of isolation in forest areas. The Semang sometimes prepare hasty bamboo rafts when they want to cross a river, however, and there do appear to be a few canoes among groups of Aetà living along the coasts. Facility of contact with neighbouring areas has brought about modification in both peoples, especially in the course of the last hundred years, whereas the complete isolation of the Andamans cannot be overstressed.

These later contacts, however, have not yet destroyed the ancient physical and cultural habits of the Semang and Aetà. The food of those who have remained nomadic in the forest still consists of roots, fruit, and whatever they can get by hunting and fishing. Some have certainly recently tended to settle, and have adopted a rude form of agriculture, but the rest have remained as primitive as the peoples of the Andamans, using digging sticks to get at the edible roots, and hooked sticks to get at the fruits on the trees. They do have axes with blades (now made of iron) which can split open tree-trunks to get at the honey inside or, when hafted on the end of a stick, to hollow out trunks to make vessels and clean off the exterior. But again, their bows and arrows, very similar to the ancient pattern, still remain their chief means of acquiring food.

The Negritos of Malacca and the Philippines make baskets, some of which are clearly copied from neighbouring peoples, while others correspond to the basketwork of the Andamans. The Onges, the finest of the Andaman basket workers, have two types of basket, one intended to last and one made purely for some temporary purpose. When they are on hunting or gathering trips outside Little Andaman they will hastily construct roughly made carriers for whatever they find. Anyone who saw, for example, these rough baskets on Rutland would assume reasonably enough that the Onge baskets are inferior to those of the peoples of Great Andaman, but in fact these purely temporary carriers, intended to be thrown away after their immediate use, are extremely well made. They are plaited over a frame of solid reeds, about two and a half centimetres in diameter, and split in half longways. The split reeds are arranged and tied in a star position to give the base and then bent upwards, the ends being joined to a circle of split reed, which forms the rim of the basket. Long ribbons of bark stripped from

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They have neither incantations, amulets nor propitiating signs to help them. Even the *marque de chasse* found on their arrow heads had no major significance; in all probability they merely served to indicate the best arrow and at most they served as a warning to the womenfolk not to touch them (it is interesting that I never saw any woman or child with a bow or an arrow). But this is as far as they go towards superstition, and its only effect is to enhance the division of duties between the sexes.

The Onges, unlike the Jarawas and Arioto, have never lost the art of canoe making, and the building of a new canoe is an important matter. The selected tree, always one of the three species of *Sterculia*, is felled and then hollowed out slowly and laboriously with a rudimentary form of hatchet, the work often being done by one man alone. The weight of the felled trunk makes it necessary for the work to be done where it falls, but after much patient whittling away the resulting canoe is extremely light, with thin walls, though still not light enough to be carried to the water, never far away. A series of short logs are used as rollers in the age-old way and the builder's friends all gather to help clear a way through the undergrowth and prepare the rollers. Only a few are needed; all is soon ready and the Onges watch delightedly as the canoe glides away down to the shore. These canoe-ways often provided me with an easy path to the sea if I came upon them in the forest. Sometimes they led not to shore but to one of the many creeks, where salt water and marine fauna penetrate miles inland and make it easy for the Onges to launch their canoes from a point far from the sea.

The Onge canoe, hollowed out in one piece, is a survival of the ancient canoes of the Neolithic age, found in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe. It survives in the Andamans, and through Oceania to the Americas, in northern Asia (notably among the Ainu) in south-west Asia, and even in south-east Africa.

The canoe has no distinction between bow and stern, and is commonly navigated from either. At each end of the canoe a crude platform juts out, on which the harpoon throwers stand. Very careful attention is paid to the float, which is fragile, and is therefore kept on the lee side. The object of it is to prevent the canoe from capsizing, which it is otherwise very liable to do owing to its round keel, always left in the natural shape of the tree-trunk. I had some experiences of rough seas in one of these canoes

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501 – I saw the float roll over my head and the entire contents of the canoe, men and cargo alike, rolled out into the water. The Onges regard this as a great joke; the canoe cannot sink, it is easily righted, and they have neither clothes nor baggage, so why worry? But even so, their canoes are far more stable in the water than any European-type craft of the same size.

When the sea is rough the Onges all move to the side of the canoe which carries the float and one lies out on the float itself to prevent it from rising out of the water as the trunk rolls. Very light waves will swamp the canoe, but it never sinks, as the float always remains on the surface, with the occupants of the canoe clinging to it. I had to do this myself on several occasions, while the Onges dived after all my baggage in great glee.

All over the world local craft are always the best adapted to local conditions. Several times I was able to land on Little Andaman in stormy weather only by leaving a modern sloop for the Onges' frail craft, identical with those in which they reached and spread over the archipelago in ancient times.

So important are their canoes to the Onges that they will expend what is for them an enormous amount of time and energy in choosing the right tree and removing the branches and the lianas twining round it. Then they wait with (for them) quite extraordinary patience for the scars to heal and become watertight before they fell the tree and begin the real work of making the canoe.

[184] On Little Andaman the single outrigger canoe is the only craft used. On Great Andaman the Jarawas, who lost the art of canoe-building during their centuries of enforced hiding in the forests, only put together very primitive rafts, hastily constructed when they have to cross a creek or a river, and then abandoned on the far side to the termites.

These rafts are merely a number of tree-trunks laid side by side and bound together with lianas and *Ficus* bark. I have seen them lying abandoned on Middle Andaman and in 1938 one was taken by the police on the occasion of the capture of three Jarawa children. Extremely roughly made, these rafts are never taken out to sea, but in recent years they have been enough to encourage the spread of the Jarawas towards North Andaman.

Among the few surviving Negritos on North Sentinel the Onge

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type of canoe is the only craft seen. I saw some hauled up on the beach, identical with the ones I had seen the Onges building, even to the *Nautilus* shell as a baler. In face of this and other evidence there can be little doubt that the people of North Sentinel are descended from the Onges, possibly driven off course by some storm, and then isolated on the island.

The Arioto, copying Indian and Burmese craft, have in recent times come to modify the original canoe somewhat, deepening the gunwales and doing away with the float. The result is a craft which though it remains small is unlikely to fill with water in heavy seas. But even the Arioto prefer the single outrigger canoe for sea voyages.

The only real seafarers, however, are the Onges, who make regular hunting trips as far as Rutland. In the past they sometimes made devastating raids as far as Car, but these have died out over the past hundred years as their numbers have dwindled. There is certainly no doubt that at one time the Onges undertook considerable sea voyages in canoes the same as they build today.

The work involved in the building of these canoes is, as I have said, enormous. The preparatory work on the tree, and then the felling, are hard enough without proper equipment. I gave my Onge friends some long-handled wood-cutter's axes, to help in this part of the work. In their enthusiasm they chopped so hard they soon broke the handles and chipped some of the tempered blades, so that I had to take them to Port Blair for repair! But the real work begins with the working of the felled trunk. Then a small and very crude form of hatchet[1] has to be used, flaking off small strips like a plane; fire is never used to assist in the process. Fortunately the *Sterculia* wood usually chosen is soft.

The original shape is not touched after the required length, calculated so as to allow for the harpoon-thrower's platform at each end, has been cut. The irregularities of the trunk are left intact, so that the canoes look distorted and even ugly despite their seaworthiness. During the preliminary stage of stripping the bark great care is taken not to chip the outer ring of wood immediately below the bark; this is smooth and fine-grained, and more waterproof than the inner layers. One danger is that as the wood dries

[1] The blades used to be made from *Tridacna* shell, but in more recent times they have come to be made of iron from wrecked ships cast up on the beaches.

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136 [222] many smaller ones, all good to eat. Near my base camp at Labanar, the men caught sackfuls of them, and I found young ones near the communal hut at Togalanghe.

There a rocky path winds down to the banks of the river Tciongarè (or Chongaree) to the south of the camp. In various places, where the path levels out, black muddy water collects into pools full of rotting leaves, lying on a bed of ooze and slime. In these pools, which appear and dry up again very quickly, I was surprised to catch a number of *silurides*. When it rains heavily, however, the pools link and join up with the river where the fish live, so that as the water disappears again any fish which have entered the pools are prevented from returning to the river, and are left lying in the slime as the water evaporates. These silurides have no gills, and are equipped instead with nostrils of an unusual type; from the nostrils protrude two cylindrical tubes, half a centimetre long in fish fifteen centimetres long, the same blackish colour as the rest of the body. The tail and the long dorsal fin are yellowish, and the long ventral fin running from the anus to the tail is whitish. There are two large lateral pectoral fins, with two very small ones between them. The eyes are large, starting out of the head like tiny glass domes. Very unfortunately a number of specimens which I had most carefully preserved were lost in transit from Port Blair to Calcutta, when some of my baggage, including the crabs and a collection of face masks of Nicobarese which had cost me a great deal of trouble, mysteriously disappeared *en route*.

136 262 226 The Onges do not eat eels,[1] which they regard as snakes, but they several times brought me examples of a very fine freshwater eel whose presence on Little Andaman I had not suspected. The Onges caught them, as they do all fish, with their bows and arrows. All weighed over half a kilogram and looked and tasted like European eels.

136 The eel of the Andamans, like those of Europe and America, has a long, almost cylindrical body and a single fin which begins on the back, circles the tail, and ends under the body just in front of the anus. There is also a pair of strong pectoral fins. The head distinguishes it from other eels, its rounded snout and wide mouth being

[184] [1] The Arioso, however, eat eels, and also mice and other small animals, although food is given to them by the Governor in return for police duties. Brown also refers to the eating of snakes and mice on Great Andaman.

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Queensland and (as the Cape Bedford type) elsewhere. Oars, method of fixing the booms and float – all are similar throughout the area, including the Andamans.

Even game, once caught, is treated and distributed similarly by these peoples, from the Andamans to Oceania. Cooking is done without salt, in earth ovens (whether or not fire or red-hot stones are used) very different from those of Africa and America. The Semang and Aetà of today know how to make fire by friction, as do the peoples of New Guinea, Australia and Polynesia; the Tasmans also have the knowledge to do so, but prefer to carry burning logs with them on their journeys, like the Andamanese. In certain parts of New Guinea and perhaps in some of the Pacific islands (as in the Andamans) the art of fire-making was unknown or possibly forgotten until recent times; it is said that the Papuans of the Bay of Astralobius knew nothing of the art until the middle of the nineteenth century. But the only sure information comes from the Andamans, where, whether through ignorance or loss of knowledge, the art of fire-making is unknown and fire is always carried everywhere.

Among the objects typical of the Andamans and found also among the Semang, the Aetà, and other Oceanic peoples are the digging stick and the crude hatchet. The former, used for gathering edible roots and tubers, is merely a pointed stick, but every family possesses one. The hatchet is slightly more elaborate, having both handle and blade, and like the digging stick, occurs always in virtually the same form.[1] Objects woven from vegetable fibres are also very similar in appearance – often very durable and sometimes pleasing by any standards. In some places woven breast-plates are used in warfare, but here the Jarawas differ, using single sheets of bark.

These are but a few of the many examples which one can find of this striking similarity between these widely separated peoples. And alongside cultural similarities there exist others, anthropological and physical, which cannot be overlooked. Physically the

[1] This is simply a cutting tool fixed into a natural elbow in a suitable branch. The blade is fixed into the wood near the elbow, and the branch is cut off, so as to leave a short handle. The whole thing is reminiscent of a swan's head on a long neck, and is easily turned into a crude plane or adze by revolving the blade in the haft through a right angle.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

kitchen-middens to have been contemporaneous with the introduction of the pig, i.e. to have been introduced by outsiders. It would be possible, using radio carbon methods, to calculate this date more accurately, but on purely archaeological evidence the introduction of pottery would appear to have occurred some five thousand years ago.

8 ABSENCE OF CANNIBALISM

If we may accept the evidence of the kitchen-middens, there has never at any time been cannibalism in the Andamans, although the practice certainly existed in the later Palaeolithic era; the Andamanese must thus have been isolated in the archipelago long before the practice became widespread.

9 DRINK

The Andamanese ignorance of any drink other than water may be regarded as additional evidence of the great antiquity of their culture.

10 ABSENCE OF CLOTHING

The Jarawas of both sexes have always remained completely naked. The Onges have only in comparatively recent times adopted a form of genital covering for their womenfolk; this custom has spread as far as the north of Great Andaman, and it seems probable that the separation of the Jarawas from the Onges dates from this time.

11 ABSENCE OF TATTOOING

All primitive peoples who are habitually completely naked adorn the body in some way. The Onges have never progressed beyond the early stage of painting themselves with ochre, and do not tattoo. Their sole ornaments are small necklaces of tusk shells, strips of bark, and sometimes flowers. In all this they resemble the Tasmans (see, however, p. 143 for certain important differences), who seem to have remained in an equally early stage of cultural development.

12 TOTEMISM AND THE CLAN

Here again the complete absence of any traces appears to indicate isolation before the spread of these very ancient concepts. Neither the Onges nor the Jarawas have ever progressed beyond the stage of independent groups of families.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

dead were buried securely bound in a knee-to-chest position, still the custom among the Andamanese). The Onges go no further than this and the idea of a Lord of the Spirits who rules all things, although on Great Andaman there has been some progress towards more anthropomorphic concepts. The complete absence of any form of cult, prayer, representation, or votive offering cannot, I feel, be the result of cultural decline from a more advanced age; this would have resulted in gross distortion and illogical superstition, but not in complete absence of any 'religious' practices of any kind.

18 SACRIFICE

No sacrifices of any kind are practised in the Andamans, nor is there any concept of propitiation, although there is evidence that even in the late Palaeolithic era some form of ritual sacrifice was practised, at least in Europe and probably over a much wider area. One would assume from this, and from paragraph 17 above, that the Andamanese is an even older culture.

19 TABOOS

Although my own experiences among the Onges have led me to think that taboos do not exist, some authors have asserted (in my view wrongly) their existence on Great Andaman. It is not, however, possible to draw any reliable conclusions on this point.

20 CEREMONIAL

The complete absence of any form of ritual surrounding birth, the purification of women, initiation, etc., or evidence of any such ritual in the past, is striking, in view of the prevalence in all the surrounding areas of strictly observed ceremonial for many occasions. As in the case of religion, such complete absence can only mean that the Andamanese became isolated before the idea of ritual spread to the area.

21 MEASUREMENT

The Andamanese have no means of counting, and no words to express gradations of time or size; to them everything is either 'small' or 'big'. They take no interest in the passing of years, and have no idea of their own age. To them life is but the passing of the seasons and the harvests of game and fish and fruits that they bring. This utter lack of any sense